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HITCHIN RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL
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R E P O R T

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

for the year ending

DECEMBER 31st, 1945  
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PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS

Medical Officer of Health:

NORMAN MACFADYEN, M.B., D.P.H., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

123 Norton Way, Letchworth.

(Phone: Letchworth 12)

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Senior Sanitary Inspector:

SAMUEL T. GUNNING, Cert. S.I.E.B., F.S.I.A.

Additional Inspector:

ROBERT B. BOLT, Cert. S.I.E.J.B., M.S.I.A.

21 Bancroft, Hitchin.

(Phone: Hitchin 1112-5)

Council Offices,  
21 Bancroft, Hitchin.

WM. E. POTTER, Clerk to the Council.

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# HITCHIN RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

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## ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH for the year ended 31st DECEMBER, 1945

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To The Chairman and Members of the Council.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This, my thirty-first Annual Report is drawn up in accordance with the requirements of the Ministry of Health. It covers the year 1945, but is somewhat brief by reason of its being unusually late, due to unusual circumstances.

### Section A

#### Statistics and Social Conditions of the District

|                                                           |              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Area (in acres) ... ..                                    | 82.559.      |
| Residential Population<br>(Registrar-General's figure) .. | 20,470       |
| Rateable Value ... ..                                     | £100,196     |
| Sum represented by a penny rate.                          | £395. 1. 5d. |
| Number of Parishes in District..                          | 34           |

The population figures as given by the Registrar-General (mid-year) show a reduction of 800 on the year.

#### Vital Statistics ... ..

##### Births

|                                       |                  |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Legitimate - Male, 167; Female, 141 ) | Total, 332       |
| Illegitimate - Male, 6; Female, 18 )  | Birth-rate, 16.2 |

##### Deaths

|                         |             |                  |
|-------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| Male, 129; Female, 123. | Total, 252. | Death-rate, 12.3 |
|-------------------------|-------------|------------------|

## Deaths of Infants under one year

|              |   |          |           |   |  |       |
|--------------|---|----------|-----------|---|--|-------|
| Legitimate   | - | Male, 6; | Female, 1 | ) |  | Total |
| Illegitimate | - | Male, 0; | Female, 0 | ) |  | 7     |

Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000 births) = 21.0

## Still Births

|              |   |          |             |       |
|--------------|---|----------|-------------|-------|
| Legitimate   | - | Male, 3; | Female, 2 ) | Total |
| Illegitimate | - | Male, 0; | Female, 0 ) | 5     |

Still Birth-rate - .25

The principal causes of death were as follows:-

|                                      |           |     |     |     |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----|-----|-----|
| Tuberculosis                         | ...       | ... | ... | 4   |
| Malignant growth                     | ...       | ... | ... | 42  |
| Disease of heart and circulation     | ..        |     |     | 106 |
| Disease of pulmonary organs          | .         | ... |     | 27  |
| Prematurity and congenital injury or |           |     |     |     |
|                                      | (disease. |     |     | 4   |
| Childbirth (not sepsis)              | ...       | ... |     | 0   |
| Infantile enteritis                  | ...       | ... | ... | 1   |

There were no deaths from the ordinary infections.

## Infectious Diseases Notified

|                     |     |     |       |     |          |                  |
|---------------------|-----|-----|-------|-----|----------|------------------|
| Chickenpox          | ... | ... | ...   | ... | 17       |                  |
| Diphtheria          | ... | ... | ...   | ... | 9        | (none confirmed) |
| Dysentery           | ... | ... | ...   | ... | 1        |                  |
| Erysipelas          | ... | ... | ...   | ... | 4        |                  |
| Infective Hepatitis | ..  | ... | ...   | ... | 1        |                  |
| Jaundice            | ... | ... | ...   | ... | 1        |                  |
| Measles             | ... | ... | ...   | ... | 197      |                  |
| Meningitis          | ... | ... | ...   | ... | 3        |                  |
| Pneumonia           | ... | ... | ...   | ... | 12       |                  |
| Scarlet Fever       | ... | ... | ...   | ... | 16       |                  |
| Tuberculosis        | ... | ... | ...   | ... | 28       |                  |
| Whooping Cough      | ..  | ... | ...   | ... | 10       |                  |
| Undulant Fever      | ..  | ... | ...   | ... | <u>1</u> |                  |
|                     |     |     | Total |     | 300      |                  |

The Scarlet Fever and Diphtheria cases were treated at the North Herts. Isolation Hospital, which is managed by the North Herts. (Joint) Hospital Board.

The vital statistics are healthy, especially as the population is probably under-estimated. Actually the age at death is increasing - this is shown by the record of the Causes of Death.

Infectious disease as a cause of death is negligible, and the general health is good. There is no doubt that the feeding of school children and the provision of milk has a beneficial result.

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### School Medical Inspection

The continued improvement in the health of the children which is daily reflected in their appearance and habits, is very gratifying, and is a growing testimony to the good work of the educational authorities including, of course, the School Nurses. Much of this School inspection work is now being done by the County Council Medical Officers.

### Diphtheria Immunisation

The success obtained by the district nurses in getting so high a percentage of the one-year olds immunised is again an outstanding feature of this work during the year.

The number of immunisations carried out during the year is 92.

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## Section B

### General Provision of Health Services

#### 1. Public Health Officials:

##### (a) Medical

The Medical Officer of Health is a part-time Officer holding a Diploma in Public Health. He is also Medical Officer of Health for Hitchin Urban and Royston Urban Districts; is assistant School Medical Officer for the County and Medical Superintendent of the Isolation Hospital.

##### (b) Sanitary

The Senior Sanitary Inspector holds the Certificate of the Sanitary Inspectors' Examination Board (London) 1920, including the qualification as an Inspector of Meat and other foods.

The Additional Sanitary Inspector holds the Certificate of the Sanitary Inspectors' Examination (Joint) Board.

##### (c) Clerical - Miss M.D.E. Sayer (resigned Jan. 1946)

### Laboratory facilities, Hospital facilities etc.

The arrangements with reference to these services continue as in former years and are proving satisfactory.

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## Section C

### Sanitary Circumstances of the Area

#### Water Supplies

The water supply position throughout the Rural is very satisfactory and continues to reflect favourably on the pre-war foresight of the Council. None of the publicly owned supplies gave any cause for anxiety during the year, while the Chemical and Bacteriological examinations of the numerous supplies yielded satisfactory results, both of raw water before treatment and from various points on the mains after treatment.

|                               |                        |    |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|----|
| Number of samples taken from  | (Satisfactory          | 5  |
| Wells and/or Boreholes... 10. | (Not altogether satis. | 3  |
|                               | (Unsatisfactory        | 2  |
| Number of samples taken from  | (Satisfactory          | 13 |
| Mains - after treatment.. 14. | (Not altogether satis. | 1  |
|                               | (Unsatisfactory        | -  |

I am looking forward to the possibility of considerable extensions to the supply as an early post-war activity, particularly to the village of Hexton, now approved by the Ministry, and to outlying groups of cottages.

### Sewage and Sewerage Disposal

No extension of sewers was undertaken during the year and while the Council's proposals for the improved works of sewage and sewerage disposal are still in abeyance, it is satisfactory that I record the measure of success obtained by the Surveyor and his Staff in dealing with the increasing volume of sewage on the existing but not too satisfactory disposal works.

### Public Cleansing

#### Refuse Collection and Disposal of Salvage

This service continues to maintain its now recognised high standard, again the greatest difficulty of the year being the maintenance of the mechanical efficiency of the vehicles. The smooth working of the service reflects credit upon the foreman and his men who have dealt with an increasing volume of work.

The figures for the year under review are as follows:-

Approximate weight collected of all materials - 2568 tons.

Of this amount the following weights were recovered and sold, yielding an income of - £655. 3. 5d. -

|                                   | <u>Tons.</u> | <u>Cwts.</u> | <u>Qrs.</u> | <u>Lbs.</u> | <u>£</u> | <u>s.</u> | <u>d.</u> |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Waste Paper                       | 68           | 16           | 3           | -           | 451.     | 3.        | 7.        |
| Textiles                          | 8            | 10           | 3           | 14          | 122.     | 10.       | 1.        |
| Bones                             | 7            | 8            | 3           | 23          | 38.      | 0.        | 6.        |
| Metals (ferrous<br>& non-ferrous) | 19           | 16           | 2           | 16          | 43.      | 9.        | 3.        |
| Totals -                          | 104          | 13           | -           | 25          | £655.    | 3.        | 5d.       |

The volume of the salvage collected and sold is less than the previous year, and the total volume of all materials collected also shows a decrease - of 198 tons.

### Sanitary Inspection of the Area

I am indebted to the Senior Sanitary Inspector, Mr. S. T. Gunning, for the figures set out in the following tables and for the information given relating to this and the remaining portion of the report. It gives further evidence of the constant and efficient work carried out by your two Inspectors.

The figures supplied are as follows:-

Total number of Inspections for all purposes - 3858.

Divided as follows:-

|                                                        |     |     |     |      |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|
| For defects under the Housing Acts                     | ... | ... | ... | 1058 |
| For defects under the Factory Acts                     | ... | ... | ... | 36   |
| For the prevention of Infectious Diseases              | ... | ... | ... | 103  |
| As to the Sanitary Condition of Schools & Public Halls |     |     |     | 31   |
| Inspections under the Milk & Dairies Order             | ... | ... | ... | 644  |
| Inspections of slaughter-houses, butchers' shops etc.  |     |     |     | 92   |
| For the prevention of Nuisances ..                     | ... | ... | ... | 83   |
| Inspections of drainage, conversions etc.              | ... | ... | ... | 78   |
| Inspections of water supplies and sampling             | ... | ... | ... | 59   |
| Supervision of Refuse Collection and Salvage Disposal  |     |     |     | 621  |
| Inspections re Rats & Mice Destruction .               | ... | ... | ... | 37   |
| Inspections under Shops Act, 1934                      | ... | ... | ... | 15   |
| Miscellaneous Inspections ..                           | ... | ... | ... | 108  |
| Interviews                                             | ... | ... | ... | 630  |
| Inspections of Moveable Dwellings                      | ... | ... | ... | 29   |
| Food & Drugs Act                                       | ... | ... | ... | 234  |
| Total                                                  |     |     |     | 3858 |

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## Section D

### Housing

The year 1945 was a period of great activity in preparation for the Housing Drive, which before this Report appears will be in full swing. Towards the end of the year building operations were commenced at Little Wymondley and Pirton, for the erection of the first twelve permanent post-war houses, the design for which shows a further advance well in keeping with the increasing demand for good housing accommodation.

It is already apparent that my next report will record a record of Housing activity, relative to the erection of new dwellings, of which the District might rightly be proud.

There are however, two somewhat disturbing thoughts. The first - when will the supply meet the demand of the one thousand odd applicants, many of whom are living in conditions which to say the least are far from comfortable.

The second disturbing thought is the increasing deterioration of many of the existing working class dwelling houses. Unsatisfactory at the commencement of the war, they reflect adversely the effect of seven years of neglect, now to be subjected to further and more stringent controls.

The Rural Housing Survey which commenced in the Autumn of the year under review, the purpose of which is to collect facts concerning the condition of all dwellings of £20 rateable value and under and to classify on the result obtained, is already confirming the anxiety felt on this subject.

The final summary and analysis of this Survey will however, provide valuable information upon which the programme for re-construction and improvement can be usefully prepared.

### Sanitary Improvements

Notwithstanding the increased restrictions imposed by the Control of Civil Buildings Order, some progress in the provision of sanitary improvements to cottages throughout the area has been made. The figures supplied for this purpose are as follows:-

|                                               |    |
|-----------------------------------------------|----|
| Sanitary Improvements, including drainage ... | 22 |
| Other Improvements and alterations .....      | 14 |

No Abatement Notices were outstanding at December 31st, 1945.

Section EInspection and Supervision of Food

Of the 152 Registered Producers and/or Producer-Retailers, 26 are now licensed for the production of Accredited Milk, and 24 for the production of Tuberculin Tested Milk. This latter figure shows an increase of 4 producers of this higher grade milk during the year.

In spite of the difficulties of labour and transport, the standard of milk produced and retailed within the district maintains a fairly satisfactory level. Because much of the milk produced in our area is delivered in bulk to nearby towns and thereby retailed, and a certain amount of milk is brought in from other districts and retailed in the area, I have endeavoured throughout the year to get as many reports as possible, during which period the Sanitary Inspectors co-operated with the Milk Testing and Advisory Scheme.

Samples taken include 313 Designated Milks and Milks supplied to Schools, the results of which are shown on the table below:-

| <u>Taken by -</u>                      | <u>Complied.</u> | <u>Failed.</u> | <u>No. samples taken</u> |
|----------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| County Vets. and<br>Sanitary Inspector | 36               | 4              | 40                       |
| Hitchin R.D.C.                         | 129              | 81             | 210                      |
| Other Authorities                      | 32               | 31             | 63                       |
|                                        | 197              | 116            | 313                      |

Of the total of 313 samples taken, 70 were also examined for the presence of Tuberculosis organisms. The result of these samples is indicated below:-

| <u>Taken by -</u>                      | <u>Positive.</u> | <u>Negative.</u> | <u>No result.</u> | <u>No. samples taken</u> |
|----------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| County Vets. and<br>Sanitary Inspector | -                | -                | 8                 | 8                        |
| Hitchin R.D.C.                         | -                | 9                | 13                | 22                       |
| Other Authorities                      | -                | 29               | 11                | 40                       |
|                                        | -                | 38               | 32                | 70                       |

The above samples were examined at the Emergency Public Health Laboratory, Cambridge, and the County Hospital Laboratory, Hertford.

In connection with unsatisfactory samples of Milk under the National Milk Testing & Advisory Scheme, follow-up work was undertaken by the officials of the War Agricultural Executive Committee. In cases where Designated Milks failed to give satisfactory results, follow-up visits were made and repeat samples obtained until satisfaction was ensured.

### Meat and other Foods

A considerable amount of work has been carried out in connection with the maintenance of standards of cleanliness in, and the protection of foodstuffs sold throughout your area. Your Sanitary Inspectors were constantly being called upon to deal with unsound or suspected food in canteens, military and buffer depots and shops throughout the district.

With regard to meat inspection, contact with the Inspecting Officers at the abattoirs was successfully maintained.

During the year a number of emergency licences for the slaughter of animals within the district were issued, and wherever practicable the carcasses thus slaughtered were examined before the meat was used for human consumption.

The bakehouses and other food stores in the area have received regular attention and some improvements have been effected.

The continuance of rationing again gave rise to many calls upon the Sanitary Inspectors for the inspection of small amounts of tinned foods, and other commodities, and the table below shows the amount of these foods which were surrendered to your Inspectors:-

| <u>Food condemned</u>                     | <u>Cwts.</u> | <u>Qrs.</u> | <u>Lbs.</u> | <u>Ozs.</u> |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Tinned foods, including<br>meats and fish | -            | 1           | 17          | 14          |
| Cake etc.                                 | 1            | -           | 2           | -           |
| Fruit & Vegetables                        | 4            | 2           | 1           | -           |
| Butter                                    | -            | -           | 17          | 12          |
| Meat                                      | -            | -           | -           | -           |
| Total weight -                            | 6            | -           | 10          | 10          |

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Tuberculosis Regulations

Table of New Cases and Mortality for the year.

| Age Periods. | <u>New Cases</u> |                  |              |                  | <u>Deaths</u> |                  |              |                  |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|
|              | Respiratory.     | Non-Respiratory. | Respiratory. | Non-Respiratory. | Respiratory.  | Non-Respiratory. | Respiratory. | Non-Respiratory. |
|              | M.               | F.               | M.           | F.               | M.            | F.               | M.           | F.               |
| 0- 1         | -                | -                | -            | -                | -             | -                | -            | -                |
| 1- 5         | -                | -                | -            | -                | -             | -                | -            | -                |
| 5-15         | 1                | 1                | 2            | 2                | -             | 1                | -            | -                |
| 15-25        | 2                | 2                | 1            | 3                | -             | 1                | -            | -                |
| 25-35        | 2                | 1                | -            | -                | -             | 1                | -            | -                |
| 35-45        | 1                | 1                | -            | -                | -             | 1                | -            | -                |
| 45-55        | 1                | -                | -            | 1                | -             | -                | -            | -                |
| 55-65        | 1                | -                | -            | -                | -             | -                | -            | -                |
| and over     | -                | 1                | -            | 1                | -             | -                | -            | -                |
| Totals       | 8                | 6                | 3            | 7                | -             | 4                | -            | -                |

The above figures show 24 new cases of Tuberculosis reported during the year under review, as against 30 for the year 1944. Again I have pleasure in reporting that 5 patients suffering from Tuberculosis were reported cured.

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Conclusion

The late appearance of this report is due to the pressure of work and changes in the Staff which have taken place in the Public Health Department. Early in the year under review Mr. R. B. Bolt succeeded Mr. J. M. Bladon as Additional Sanitary Inspector, while at the conclusion of that period the Department was handicapped by the illness and subsequent resignation of Miss Soyer, Shorthand-Typist.

However, the Report in general shows a year of good work, fuller results of which will be reflected in my next Report which will be in the nature of a survey report, and will be prepared in good time.

I would again express my sincere appreciation for the co-operation and willing support given me in all matters relating to Public Health by the members of the Council and my colleagues in all Departments.

Your obedient servant,

*Norman M. Fudge*

Medical Officer of Health

1.11.46



